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FREEDOM AND SLAVERY IN APPALACHIAN AMERICA

To understand the problem of harmonizing freedom and slavery in Appalachian America we must keep in mind two different stocks coming in some cases from the same mother country and subject here to the same government. Why they differed so widely was due to their peculiar ideals formed prior to their emigration from Europe and to their environment in the New World. To the Tidewater came a class whose character and purposes, although not altogether alike, easily enabled them to develop into an aristocratic class. All of them were trying to lighten the burdens of life. In this section favored with fertile soil, mild climate, navigable streams and good harbors facilitating direct trade with Europe, the conservative, easy-going, wealth-seeking, exploiting adventurers finally fell back on the institution of slavery which furnished the basis for a large plantation system of seeming principalities. In the course of time too there arose in the few towns of the coast a number of prosperous business men whose bearing was equally as aristocratic as that of the masters of plantations.¹ These elements constituted the rustic nobility which lorded it over the unfortunate settlers whom the plantation system forced to go into the interior to take up land. Eliminating thus an enterprising middle class, the colonists tended to become more aristocratic near the shore.

In this congenial atmosphere the eastern people were content to dwell. The East had the West in mind and said much about its inexhaustible resources, but with the exception of obtaining there grants of land nothing definite toward the conquest of this section was done because of the handicap of slavery which precluded the possibility of a rapid expansion of the plantation group in the slave States. Separated thus by high ranges of mountains which prevented

¹ Wertenbaker, "Patrician and Plebeian in Virginia," 31.

the unification of the interests of the sections, the West was left for conquest by a hardy race of European dissenters who were capable of a more rapid growth.² These were the Germans and Scotch-Irish with a sprinkling of Huguenots, Quakers and poor whites who had served their time as indentured servants in the East.³ The unsettled condition of Europe during its devastating wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries caused many of foreign stocks to seek homes in America where they hoped to realize political liberty and religious freedom. Many of these Germans first settled in the mountainous district of Pennsylvania and Maryland and then migrated later to the lower part of the Shenandoah Valley, while the Scotch-Irish took

² Exactly how many of each race settled in the Appalachian region we cannot tell, but we know that they came in large numbers, after the year 1735. A few important facts and names may give some idea as to the extent of this immigration. The Shenandoah Valley attracted many. Most prominent among those who were instrumental in settling the Valley was the Scotchman, John Lewis, the ancestor of so many families of the mountains. The Dutchmen, John and Isaac Van Meter, were among the first to buy land from Joist Hite, probably the first settler in the Valley. Among other adventurers of this frontier were Benjamin Allen, Riley Moore, and William White, of Maryland, who settled in the Shenandoah in 1734; Robert Harper and others who, in the same year, settled Richard Morgan's grant near Harper's Ferry; and Howard, Walker, and Rutledge, who took up land on what became the Fairfax Manor on the South Branch. In 1738 some Quakers came from Pennsylvania to occupy the Ross Survey of 40,000 acres near Winchester Farm in what is now Frederick County, Virginia. In the following year John and James Lindsay reached Long Marsh, and Isaac Larnie of New Jersey the same district about the same time; while Joseph Carter of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, built his cabin on the Opequon near Winchester in 1743, and Joseph Hampton with his two sons came from Maryland to Buck Marsh near Berryville. But it is a more important fact that Burden, a Scotch-Irishman, obtained a large grant of land and settled it with hundreds of his race during the period from 1736 to 1743, and employed an agent to continue the work. With Burden came the McDowells, Alexanders, Campbells, McClungs, McCampbells, McCowans, and McKees, Prestons, Browns, Wallaces, Wilsons, McCues, and Caruthers. They settled the upper waters of the Shenandoah and the James, while the Germans had by this time well covered the territory between what is known as Harrisonburg and the present site of Harper's Ferry. See Maury, "Physical Survey," 42; *Virginia Magazine*, IX, 337-352; Washington's Journal, 47-48; Wayland, "German Element of the Shenandoah," 110.

³ Wayland, "German Element of the Shenandoah," 28-30; *Virginia Historical Register*, III, 10.

possession of the upper part of that section. Thereafter the Shenandoah Valley became a thoroughfare for a continuous movement of these immigrants toward the South into the uplands and mountains of the Carolinas, Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee.⁴

Among the Germans were Mennonites, Lutherans, and Moravians, all of whom believed in individual freedom, the divine right of secular power, and personal responsibility.⁵ The strongest stock among these immigrants, however, were the Scotch-Irish, "a God-fearing, Sabbath-keeping, covenant-adhering, liberty-loving, and tyrant-hating race," which had formed its ideals under the influence of philosophy of John Calvin, John Knox, Andrew Melville, and George Buchanan. By these thinkers they had been taught to emphasize equality, freedom of conscience, and political liberty. These stocks differed somewhat from each other, but they were equally attached to practical religion, homely virtues, and democratic institutions.⁷ Being a kind and beneficent class with a tenacity for the habits and customs of their fathers, they proved to be a valuable contribution to the American stock. As they had no riches every man was to be just what he could make himself. Equality and brotherly love became their dominant traits. Common feel-

⁴ See Meade, "Old Families of Virginia," *The Transallegany Historical Magazine*, I and II; De Hass, "The Settlement of Western Virginia," 71, 75; Kercheval, "History of the Valley," 61-71; Faust, "The German Element in the United States."

⁵ Dunning, "The History of Political Theory from Luther to Montesquieu," 9, 10.

⁷ Buchanan, the most literary of these reformers, insisted that society originates in the effort of men to escape from the primordial state of nature, that in a society thus formed the essential to well-being is justice, that justice is maintained by laws rather than by kings, that the maker of the laws is the people, and that the interpreter of the laws is not the king, but the body of judges chosen by the people. He reduced the power of the ruler to the minimum, the only power assigned to him being to maintain the morals of the state by making his life a model of virtuous living. The reformer claimed, too, that when the ruler exceeds his power he becomes a tyrant, and that people are justified in rejecting the doctrine of passive obedience and slaying him. See Buchanan, "De Jure Apud Scotos" (Aberdeen, 1762); Dunning, "History of Political Theories from Luther to Montesquieu"; and P. Hume Brown, "Biography of John Knox."

ing and similarity of ideals made them one people whose chief characteristic was individualism.⁸ Differing thus so widely from the easterners they were regarded by the aristocrats as "Men of new blood" and "Wild Irish," who formed a barrier over which "none ventured to leap and would venture to settle among."⁹ No aristocrat figuring conspicuously in the society of the East, where slavery made men socially unequal, could feel comfortable on the frontier, where freedom from competition with such labor prevented the development of caste.

⁸ Just how much the racial characteristics had to do with making this wilderness a center of democracy, it is difficult to estimate. Some would contend that although the Western people were of races different from this aristocratic element of the East, their own history shows that this had little to do with the estrangement of the West from the East, and that the fact that many persons of these same stocks who settled in the East became identified with the interests of that section is sufficient evidence to prove what an insignificant factor racial characteristics are. But although environment proves itself here to be the important factor in the development of these people and we are compelled to concede that the frontier made the Western man an advocate of republican principles, heredity must not be ignored altogether.

Exactly how much influence the Scotch-Irish had in shaping the destiny of Appalachian America is another much mooted question with which we are concerned here because historians give almost all the credit to this race. Even an authority like Justin Winsor leaves the impression that Virginia cared little for the frontier, and that all honor is due to the Scotch-Irish. Their influence in shaping the destiny of other States has been equally emphasized. The facts collected by Hanna doubtless give much support to the claims of that people to the honor for the development of Appalachian America. His conclusions, however, are rather far-sweeping and often shade into imagination. On the other hand, a good argument may be made to prove that other people, such as the Germans and Dutch, deserve equal honor. Furthermore, few of the eulogists of the Scotch-Irish take into account the number of indentured servants and poor whites who moved westward with the frontier. Besides, it must not be thought that the East neglected the frontier intentionally simply because the Tidewater people could not early subdue the wilderness. They did much to develop it. The records of the time of the Indian troubles beginning in 1793 show that the State governments answered the call for troops and ammunition as promptly as they could, and their statute books show numerous laws which were enacted in the interest of the West during these troubles. The truth of the matter is that, whatever might have been the desire of the East to conquer the wilderness, the sectionalizing institution of slavery which the colony had accepted as the basis of its society rendered the accomplishment of such an object impossible. There was too great diversity of interest in that region.

⁹ Jefferson's Works, VI, 484.

The natural endowment of the West was so different from that of the East that the former did not attract the people who settled in the Tidewater. The mountaineers were in the midst of natural meadows, steep hills, narrow valleys of hilly soil, and inexhaustible forests. In the East tobacco and corn were the staple commodities. Cattle and hog raising became profitable west of the mountains, while various other employments which did not require so much vacant land were more popular near the sea. Besides, when the dwellers near the coast sought the cheap labor which the slave furnished the mountaineers encouraged the influx of freemen. It is not strange then that we have no record of an early flourishing slave plantation beyond the mountains. Kercheval gives an account of a settlement by slaves and overseers on the large Carter grant situated on the west side of the Shenandoah, but it seems that the settlement did not prosper as such, for it soon passed into the hands of the Burwells and the Pages.¹⁰

The rise of slavery in the Tidewater section, however, established the going of those settlers in the direction of government for the people. The East began with indentured servants but soon found the system of slavery more profitable. It was not long before the blacks constituted the masses of the laboring population,¹¹ while on the expiration of their term of service the indentured servants went west and helped to democratize the frontier. Caste too was secured by the peculiar land tenure of the East. The king and the proprietors granted land for small sums on feudal terms. The grantees in their turn settled these holdings in fee tail on the oldest son in accordance with the law of primogeniture. This produced a class described by Jefferson who said: "There were then aristocrats, half-breeds, pretenders, a solid independent yeomanry, looking askance at those above, yet not venturing to jostle them, and last and

¹⁰ Kercheval, "History of the Valley," 47 and 48.

¹¹ It soon became evident that it was better to invest in slaves who had much more difficulty than the indentured servants in escaping and passing as freemen.

lowest, a seculum of beings called overseers, the most abject, degraded and unprincipled race, always cap in hand to the Dons who employed them for furnishing material for the exercise of their price." ¹²

In the course of colonial development the people of the mountains were usually referred to as frontiersmen dwelling in the West. This "West" was for a number of years known as the region beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains and later beyond the Alleghenies. A more satisfactory dividing line, however, is the historical line of demarcation between the East and West which moved toward the mountains in the proportion that the western section became connected with the East and indoctrinated by its proslavery propagandists. In none of these parts, however, not even far south, were the eastern people able to bring the frontiersmen altogether around to their way of thinking. Their ideals and environment caused them to have differing opinions as to the extent, character, and foundations of local self-government, differing conceptions of the meaning of representative institutions, differing ideas of the magnitude of governmental power over the individual, and differing theories of the relations of church and State. The East having accepted caste as the basis of its society naturally adopted the policy of government by a favorite minority, the West inclined more and more toward democracy. The latter considered representatives only those who had been elected as such by a majority of the people of the district in which they lived; the former believed in a more restricted electorate, and the representation of districts and interests, rather than that of numbers.¹³ Furthermore, almost from the founding of the colonies there was court party consisting of the rich planters and favorites composing the coterie of royal officials generally opposed by a country party of men who, either denied certain privileges or unaccustomed to participation in the affairs of privileged classes, felt that

¹² Jefferson's Works, VI, 484.

¹³ This statement is based on the provisions of the first State constitutions. See Thorpe's "Charters and Constitutions."

the interests of the lowly were different. As the frontier moved westward the line of cleavage tended to become identical with that between the privileged classes and the small farmers, between the lowlanders and the uplanders, between capital and labor, and finally between the East and West.

The frontiersmen did not long delay in translating some of their political theories into action. The aristocratic East could not do things to suit the mountaineers who were struggling to get the government nearer to them. At times, therefore, their endeavors to abolish government for the people resulted in violent frontier uprisings like that of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia and the War of Regulation in North Carolina. In all of these cases the cause was practically the same. These pioneers had observed with jealous eye the policy which bestowed all political honors on the descendants of a few wealthy families living upon the tide or along the banks of the larger streams. They were, therefore, inclined to advance with quick pace toward revolution.¹⁴ On finding such leaders as James Otis, Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson, the frontiersmen instituted such a movement in behalf of freedom that it resulted in the Revolutionary War.¹⁵ These patriots' advocacy of freedom, too, was not half-hearted. When they demanded liberty for the colonists they spoke also for the slaves, so emphasizing the necessity for abolition that observers from afar thought that the institution would of itself soon pass away.¹⁶

In the reorganization of the governments necessitated by the overthrow of the British, however, the frontiersmen were unfortunate in that they lacked constructive leader-

¹⁴ Grigsby, "Convention of 1788," 15, 49.

¹⁵ The people living near the coast desired reform under British rule. The frontiersmen had to win them to the movement. A certain Scotch-Irish element in the Carolinas was an exception to this rule in that they at first supported the British.

¹⁶ The letters and speeches of most of the Revolutionary leaders show that they favored some kind of abolition. Among the most outspoken were James Otis, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and John Laurens. See also Schoepf, "Travels in the Confederation," 149; and Brissot de Warville, "New Travels," I, 220.

ship adequate to having their ideas incorporated into the new constitutions. Availing themselves of their opportunity, the aristocrats of the coast fortified themselves in their advantageous position by establishing State governments based on the representation of interests, the restriction of suffrage, and the ineligibility of the poor to office.¹⁷ Moreover, efforts were made even to continue in a different form the Established Church against which the dissenting frontiersmen had fought for more than a century. In the other Atlantic States where such distinctions were not made in framing their constitutions, the conservatives resorted to other schemes to keep the power in the hands of the rich planters near the sea. When the Appalachian Americans awoke to the situation then they were against a stone wall. The so-called rights of man were subjected to restrictions which in our day could not exist. The right to hold office and to vote were not dependent upon manhood qualifications but on a white skin, religious opinions, the payment of taxes, and wealth. In South Carolina a person desiring to vote must believe in the existence of a God, in a future state of reward and punishment, and have a freehold of fifty acres of land. In Virginia the right of suffrage was restricted to freeholders possessing one hundred acres of land. Senators in North Carolina had to own three hundred acres of land; representatives in South Carolina were required to have a 500 acre freehold and 10 Negroes; and in Georgia 250 acres and support the Protestant religion.¹⁸ In all of these slave States, suffering from such unpopular government, the mountaineers developed into a reform party persistently demanding that the sense of the people be taken on the question of calling together their representatives to remove certain defects from the constitutions. It was the contest between the aristocrats and the progressive westerner. The aristocrats' idea of government was developed from the "English Scion—the liberty of kings, lords, and commons,

¹⁷ See the various State constitutions in Thorpe's "Charters and Constitutions."

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

with different grades of society acting independently of all foreign powers." The ideals of the westerners were principally those of the Scotch-Irish, working for "civil liberty in fee simple, and an open road to civil honors, secured to the poorest and feeblest members of society."¹⁹

The eastern planters, of course, regarded this as an attack on their system and fearlessly denounced these rebellious wild men of the hills. In taking this position, these conservatives brought down upon their heads all of the ire that the frontiersmen had felt for the British prior to the American Revolution. The easterners were regarded in the mountains as a party bent upon establishing in this country a régime equally as oppressive as the British government. The frontiersmen saw in slavery the cause of the whole trouble. They, therefore, hated the institution and endeavored more than ever to keep their section open to free labor. They hated the slave as such, not as a man. On the early southern frontier there was more prejudice against the slaveholder than against the Negro.²⁰ There was the feeling that this was not a country for a laboring class so undeveloped as the African slaves, then being brought to these shores to serve as a basis for a government differing radically from that in quest of which the frontiersmen had left their homes in Europe.

This struggle reached its climax in different States at various periods. In Maryland the contest differed somewhat from that of other Southern States because of the contiguity of that commonwealth with Pennsylvania, which early set such examples of abolition and democratic government that a slave State near by could not go so far in fortifying an aristocratic governing class. In Virginia the situation was much more critical than elsewhere. Unlike the other Atlantic States, which wisely provided roads and canals to unify the diverse interests of the sections, that commonwealth left the trans-Alleghany district to continue

¹⁹ Foote, "Sketches of Virginia," 85.

²⁰ Hart, "Slavery and Abolition," 73; Olmsted, "The Back Country," 230-232. *Berea Quarterly*, IX, No. 3.

in its own way as a center of insurgency from which war was waged against the established order of things.²¹ In most States, however, the contest was decided by the invention of the cotton gin and other mechanical appliances which, in effecting an industrial revolution throughout the world, gave rise to the plantation system found profitable to supply the increasing demand for cotton. In the course of the subsequent expansion of slavery, many of the uplanders and mountaineers were gradually won to the support of that institution. Realizing gradually a community of interests with the eastern planters, their ill-feeling against them tended to diminish. Abolition societies which had once flourished among the whites of the uplands tended to decline and by 1840 there were practically no abolitionists in the South living east of the Appalachian Mountains.²²

Virginia, which showed signs of discord longer than the other Atlantic States, furnishes us a good example of how it worked out. The reform party of the West finally forced the call of a convention in 1829, hoping in vain to crush the aristocracy. Defeated in this first battle with the conservatives, they secured the call of the Reform Convention in 1850 only to find that two thirds of the State had become permanently attached to the cause of maintaining slavery.²³ Samuel McDowell Moore, of Rockbridge County in the Valley, said in the Convention of 1829-30 that slaves should be free to enjoy their natural rights,²⁴ but a generation later the people of that section would not have justified such an utterance in behalf of freedom. The uplanders of South Carolina were early satisfied with such changes as were made in the apportionment of representation in 1808, and

²¹ See the Speeches of the Western members of the Virginia Convention of 1829-30, *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention of 1829-30*.

²² This is proved by the reports and records of the anti-slavery societies and especially by those of the American Convention of Abolition Societies. During the thirties and forties the southern societies ceased to make reports. See Adams, "A Neglected Period of Anti-Slavery," 117.

²³ The vote on the aristocratic constitution framed in 1829-30 shows this. See *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention of 1829-30*, p. 903.

²⁴ *Proceedings and Debates of the Convention of 1829-30*, p. 226.

in the qualifications of voters in 1810.²⁵ Thereafter Calhoun's party, proceeding on the theory of government by a concurrent majority, vanquished what few liberal-minded men remained, and then proceeded to force their policy on the whole country.

In the Appalachian Mountains, however, the settlers were loath to follow the fortunes of the ardent pro-slavery element. Actual abolition was never popular in western Virginia, but the love of the people of that section for freedom kept them estranged from the slaveholding districts of the State, which by 1850 had completely committed themselves to the pro-slavery propaganda. In the Convention of 1829-30 Upshur said there existed in a great portion of the West (of Virginia) a rooted antipathy to the slave.²⁶ John Randolph was alarmed at the fanatical spirit on the subject of slavery, which was growing up in Virginia. Some of this sentiment continued in the mountains. The highlanders, therefore, found themselves involved in a continuous embroglio because they were not moved by reactionary influences which were unifying the South for its bold effort to make slavery a national institution.²⁷

The indoctrination of the backwoodsmen of North Carolina in the tenets of slavery was effected without much difficulty because of less impediment in the natural barriers, but a small proportion of the inhabitants of the State residing in the mountainous districts continued anti-slavery. There was an unusually strong anti-slavery element in Davie, Davidson, Granville and Guilford counties. The efforts of this liberal group, too, were not long in taking organized form. While there were several local organizations operating in various parts, the efforts of the anti-slavery people centered around the North Carolina Manumission Society. It had over forty branches at one time, besides several associations of women, all extending into seven or eight of the most

²⁵ Thorpe, "Charters and Constitutions, South Carolina."

²⁶ Proceedings and Debates of the Convention of 1829-30, pp. 53, 76, 442, 558.

²⁷ See Calhoun's Works: "A Disquisition on Government," p. 1 et seq.

populous counties of the State. This society denounced the importation and exportation of slaves, and favored providing for manumissions, legalizing slave contracts for the purchase of freedom, and enacting a law that at a certain age all persons should be born free.²⁸ That these reformers had considerable influence is evidenced by the fact that in 1826 a member of the manumission society was elected to the State Senate. In 1824 and 1826 two thousand slaves were freed in North Carolina.²⁹ Among the distinguished men who at times supported this movement in various ways were Hinton Rowan Helper, Benjamin S. Hedrick, Daniel R. Goodloe, Eli W. Caruthers, and Lunsford Lane, a colored orator and lecturer of considerable ability.³⁰ They constituted a hopeless minority, however, for the liberal element saw their hopes completely blasted in the triumph of the slave party in the Convention of 1835, which made everything subservient to the institution of slavery.

In the mountains of Kentucky and Tennessee conditions were a little more encouraging, especially between 1817 and 1830. The anti-slavery work in Kentucky seemed to owe its beginning to certain "Emancipating Baptists." Early in the history of that State six Baptist preachers, Carter Tarrant, David Darrow, John Sutton, Donald Holmes, Jacob Gregg, and George Smith, began an anti-slavery campaign, maintaining that there should be no fellowship with slaveholders.³¹ They were unable to effect much, however, because of the fact that they had no extensive organization through which to extend their efforts. Every church remained free to decide for itself and even in Northern States the Baptists later winked at slavery. More effective than these efforts of the Baptists was the work of the Scotch-Irish. Led by David Rice, a minister of the Presbyterian Church, the anti-slavery element tried to exclude slavery

²⁸ Adams, "Neglected Period of Anti-Slavery," 138.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁰ Bassett, "Anti-Slavery Leaders of North Carolina," 72.

³¹ Adams, "Anti-Slavery, etc.," 100-101.

from the State when framing its first constitution in the Convention of 1792.³² Another effort thus to amend the fundamental law was made at the session of the legislature of 1797-98, and had it not been for the excitement aroused by the Alien and Sedition Laws, the bill probably would have passed.³³

Many successful efforts were made through the anti-slavery bodies. The society known as "Friends of Humanity" was organized in Kentucky in 1807. It had a constitution signed by eleven preachers and thirteen laymen. The organization was in existence as late as 1813. The records of the abolitionists show that there was another such society near Frankfort between 1809 and 1823.³⁴ Birney then appeared in the State and gave his influence to the cause with a view to promoting the exportation of Negroes to Liberia.³⁵ A number of citizens also memorialized Congress to colonize the Negroes on the public lands in the West.³⁶ In the later twenties an effort was made to unite the endeavors of many wealthy and influential persons who were then interested in promoting abolition. Lacking a vigorous and forceful leader, they appealed to Henry Clay, who refused.³⁷ They fought on, however, for years to come. A contributor to the *Western Luminary* said, in 1830, that the people of Kentucky were finding slavery a burden.³⁸ Evidently a good many of them had come to this conclusion, for a bill providing for emancipation introduced in the Legislature was postponed indefinitely by a vote of 18 to 11.³⁹ So favorable were conditions in Kentucky at this time that it was said that Tennessee was watch-

³² Speech of David Rice in the Constitutional Convention of Kentucky, 1792.

³³ Birney, "James G. Birney," 96-100.

³⁴ Reports of the American Convention of Abolition Societies, 1809 and 1823.

³⁵ Birney, "James G. Birney," 70.

³⁶ Adams, "The Neglected Period of Anti-Slavery in America," 129-130. Annals of Congress, 17th Congress, 1st ses., 2d ses., 18th Cong., 1st ses.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁸ "The Genius of Universal Emancipation," 11. 35.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 10. 145.

ing Kentucky with the expectation of following her lead should the latter become a free State as was then expected.

The main factor in promoting the work in Tennessee was, as in Kentucky, the Scotch-Irish Presbyterian stock. They opposed slavery in word and in deed, purchasing and setting free a number of colored men. Among these liberal westerners was organized the "Manumission Society of Tennessee," represented for years in the American Convention of Abolition Societies by Benjamin Lundy.⁴⁰ The Tennessee organization once had twenty branches and a membership of six hundred.⁴¹ Among its promoters were Charles Osborn, Elihu Swain, John Underhill, Jesse Willis, John Cannady, John Swain, David Maulsby, John Rankin, Jesse Lockhart, and John Morgan.⁴² They advocated at first immediate and unconditional emancipation, but soon seeing that the realization of this policy was impossible, they receded from this advanced position and memorialized their representatives to provide for gradual emancipation, the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, the prevention of the separation of families, the prohibition of the interstate slave trade, the restriction of slavery, the general improvement of colored people through church and school, and especially the establishment among them of the right of marriage.⁴³ To procure the abolition of slavery by argument, other persons of this section organized another body, known as the "Moral Religious Manumission Society of West Tennessee."⁴⁴ It once had a large membership and tended to increase and spread the agitation in behalf of abolition.

In view of these favorable tendencies, it was thought up to 1830 that Tennessee, following the lead of Kentucky,

⁴⁰ See Proceedings of the American Convention of Abolition Societies.

⁴¹ Adams, "The Neglected Period of Anti-Slavery," 132.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 131.

⁴³ "The Genius of Universal Emancipation," 1. 142; 5. 409.

⁴⁴ "The Genius of Universal Emancipation," 4. 76, 142; Birney, "James G. Birney," 77; Minutes of the American Convention of Abolition Societies, 1826, p. 48.

would become a free State.⁴⁵ But just as the expansion of slavery into the interior of the Atlantic States attached those districts to the fortunes of the slaveholding class, it happened in some cases in the mountains which to some extent became indoctrinated by the teaching of the defenders of slavery. Then the ardent slavery debate in Congress and the bold agitation, like that of the immediatists led by William Lloyd Garrison, alienated the support which some mountaineers had willingly given the cause. Abolition in these States, therefore, began to weaken and rapidly declined during the thirties.⁴⁶ Because of a heterogeneous membership, these organizations tended to develop into other societies representing differing ideas of anti-slavery factions which had at times made it impossible for them to coöperate effectively in carrying out any plan. The slaveholders who had been members formed branches of the American Colonization Society, while the radical element fell back upon organizing branches of the Underground Railroad to coöperate with those of their number who, seeing that it was impossible to attain their end in the Southern mountains, had moved into the Northwest Territory to colonize the freedmen and aid the escape of slaves.⁴⁷ Among these workers who had thus changed their base of operation were not only such noted men as Joshua Coffin, Benjamin Lundy, and James G. Birney, but less distinguished workers like John Rankin, of Ripley; James Gilliland, of Red Oak; Jesse Lockhart, of Russellville; Robert Dobbins, of Sardinia; Samuel Crothers, of Greenfield; Hugh L. Fullerton, of Chillicothe, and William Dickey, of Ross or Fayette County, Ohio. There were other southern abolitionists who settled and established stations of the Underground Railroad in Bond, Putnam, and Bureau counties, Illinois.⁴⁸ The Underground Railroad was thus enabled to extend into the heart of the South by way of the

⁴⁵ "The Genius of Universal Emancipation," 11. 65, 66.

⁴⁶ See The Minutes and Proceedings of the American Convention of Abolition Societies, covering this period.

⁴⁷ This statement is based on the accounts of a number of abolitionists.

⁴⁸ Adams, "A Neglected Period of Anti-Slavery," 60, 61.

Cumberland Mountains. Over this Ohio and Kentucky route, culminating chiefly in Cleveland, Sandusky, and Detroit, more fugitives found their way to freedom than through any other avenue.⁴⁹ The limestone caves were of much assistance to them. The operation of the system extended through Tennessee into northern Georgia and Alabama, following the Appalachian highland as it juts like a peninsula into the South. Dillingham, John Brown, and Harriet Tubman used these routes.

Let us consider, then, the attitude of these mountaineers toward slaves. All of them were not abolitionists. Some slavery existed among them. The attack on the institution, then, in these parts was not altogether opposition to an institution foreign to the mountaineers. The frontiersmen hated slavery, hated the slave as such, but, as we have observed above, hated the eastern planter worse than they hated the slave. As there was a scarcity of slaves in that country they generally dwelt at home with their masters. Slavery among these liberal people, therefore, continued patriarchal and so desirous were they that the institution should remain such that they favored the admission of the State of Missouri as a slave State,⁵⁰ not to promote slavery but to expand it that each master, having a smaller number of Negroes, might keep them in close and helpful contact. Consistently with this policy many of the frontier Baptists, Scotch-Irish and Methodists continued to emphasize the education of the blacks as the correlative of emancipation. They urged the masters to give their servants all proper advantages for acquiring knowledge of their duty both to man and to God. In large towns slaves were permitted to acquire the rudiments of education and in some of them free persons of color had well-regulated schools.⁵¹

Two noteworthy efforts to educate Negroes were put forth in these parts. A number of persons united in 1825 to found an institution for the education of eight or ten

⁴⁹ Siebert, "The Underground Railroad," 10. 346.

⁵⁰ Ambler, "Sectionalism in Virginia," 107-108.

⁵¹ Woodson, "The Education of the Negro," 120-121.

Negro slaves with their families, to be operated under the direction of the "Emancipating Labor Society of the State of Kentucky." About the same time Frances Wright was endeavoring to establish an institution on the same order to improve the free blacks and mulattoes in West Tennessee. It seems that this movement had the support of a goodly number of persons, including George Fowler, and, it was said, Lafayette, who had always been regarded as a friend of emancipation. According to a letter from a clergyman of South Carolina, the first slave for this institution went from the York district of that State. Exactly what these enterprises were, however, it is difficult to determine. They were not well supported and soon passed from public notice. Some have said that the Tennessee project was a money-making scheme for the proprietors, and that the Negroes taught there were in reality slaves. Others have defended the work as a philanthropic effort so characteristic of the friends of freedom in Appalachian America.⁵²

The people of Eastern Tennessee were largely in favor of Negro education. Around Maryville and Knoxville were found a considerable number of white persons who were thus interested in the uplift of the belated race. Well might such efforts be expected in Maryville, for the school of theology at this place had gradually become so radical that according to the *Maryville Intelligencer* half of the students by 1841 declared their adherence to the cause of abolition.⁵³ Consequently, they hoped not only to see such doctrines triumph within the walls of that institution, but were endeavoring to enlighten the Negroes of that community to prepare them for the enjoyment of life as citizens in their own or some other country.⁵⁴

Just as the people of Maryville had expressed themselves through *The Intelligencer*, so did those of Knoxville

⁵² "The Genius of Universal Emancipation," 5. 117, 126, 164, 188, 275, 301, 324, 365; 6. 21, 140, 177.

⁵³ The Fourth Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society, 1837, p. 48; The New England Anti-Slavery Almanac for 1841, p. 31.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

find a spokesman in *The Presbyterian Witness*. Excoriating those who had for centuries been finding excuses for keeping the slaves in heathenism, the editor of this publication said that there was not a solitary argument that might be urged in favor of teaching a white man that might not be as properly urged in favor of enlightening a man of color. "If one has a soul that will never die," said he, "so has the other. Has one susceptibilities of improvement, mentally, socially, and morally? So has the other. Is one bound by the laws of God to improve the talents he has received from the Creator's hands? So is the other. Is one embraced in the commands search the scriptures? So is the other."⁵⁵ He maintained that unless masters could lawfully degrade their slaves to the condition of beasts, they were just as much bound to teach them to read the Bible as to teach any other class of their population.

From a group in Kentucky came another helpful movement. Desiring to train up white men who would eventually be able to do a work which public sentiment then prevented the anti-slavery minority from carrying on, the liberal element of Kentucky, under the leadership of John G. Fee and his coworkers, established Berea College. Believing in the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, this institution incorporated into its charter the bold declaration that "God hath made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth." This profession was not really put to a test until after the Civil War, when the institution courageously met the issue by accepting as students some colored soldiers who were returning home wearing their uniforms.⁵⁶ The State has since prohibited the co-education of the races.

With so many sympathizers with the oppressed in the back country, the South had much difficulty in holding the mountaineers in line to force upon the whole nation their policies, mainly determined by their desire for the continuation of slavery. Many of the mountaineers accordingly

⁵⁵ *The African Repository*, XXXII, 16.

⁵⁶ The Catalogue of Berea College, 1897.

deserted the South in its opposition to the tariff and internal improvements, and when that section saw that it had failed in economic competition with the North, and realized that it had to leave the Union soon or never, the mountaineers who had become commercially attached to the North and West boldly adhered to these sections to maintain the Union. The highlanders of North Carolina were finally reduced to secession with great difficulty; Eastern Tennessee had to yield, but kept the State almost divided between the two causes; timely dominated by Unionists with the support of troops, Kentucky stood firm; and to continue attached to the Federal Government forty-eight western counties of Virginia severed their connection with the essentially slaveholding district and formed the loyal State of West Virginia.

In the mountainous region the public mind has been largely that of people who have developed on free soil. They have always differed from the dwellers in the district near the sea not only in their attitude toward slavery but in the policy they have followed in dealing with the blacks since the Civil War. One can observe even to-day such a difference in the atmosphere of the two sections, that in passing from the tidewater to the mountains it seems like going from one country into another. There is still in the back country, of course, much of that lawlessness which shames the South, but crime in that section is not peculiarly the persecution of the Negro. Almost any one considered undesirable is dealt with unceremoniously. In Appalachian America the races still maintain a sort of social contact. White and black men work side by side, visit each other in their homes, and often attend the same church to listen with delight to the Word spoken by either a colored or white preacher.

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